

NATIONAL EPA-TRIBAL SCIENCE COUNCIL

Conference Call Summary

Monday, April 16, 2012

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Saving Time

Participants

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Roll Call

Monica Rodia, Executive Secretary of the National EPA-Tribal Science Council (TSC), welcomed the members to the teleconference and took roll.

March Business Meeting Minutes

Monica reported that the March business meeting minutes have been reviewed finalized and distributed to the TSC members and are now part of the official record. She reiterated that members who are unable to attend a teleconference or multitask during calls should read the minutes to ensure that they are up to date on TSC activities. The last two meetings have focused on the Tribal ecoAmbassadors Program. Patti Tyler added that it would be beneficial for the TSC members to be familiar with the ecoAmbassadors projects prior to attending the face-to-face meeting in June. Monica will send the TSC members their “homework” via email at least two weeks ahead to prepare for the meeting.

Caucus Reports

Jeff Mears reported that the Tribal Caucus is meeting on Friday, April 20, 2012, at 2:00 p.m. CDT to continue reviewing the TSC Overview Document. Jeff was contacted by Doug Kluck from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration about a group called the Keystone Center, which is working with federal agencies regarding climate change. Jeff was invited to participate in a Climate Conversations Workshop sponsored by The Keystone Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on March 30, 2012. A wide range of organizations attended the workshop, including universities, interfaith groups, museums and the Sierra Club, and discussed climate change adaptation. Jeff said a report from the meeting will be generated, and he will provide it to the TSC members once it is complete. He appreciated the invitation to learn about groups with which the tribes usually do not interact. He added Resource Media, a nonprofit public relations firm that attended the workshop, has offered to work with the tribes, and this could be an opportunity for the TSC to work with the organization on public outreach.

Patti reported that Mike Durglo had been elected as Vice Chair of the Region 8 Regional Operations Committee (ROC). During the recent Region 8 ROC meeting, he provided an update on the activities of the TSC, inventorying the work and activities that the TSC is undertaking in terms of the Tribal Science Priorities (TSPs). His presentation was well-received.

Ted Coopwood shared that a joint memorandum was sent from the Office of International and Tribal Affairs Assistant Administrator (AA) and Office of Research and Development acting AA to all AAs and Regional Administrators about the national tribal science priorities and requested them to provide a summary of program and regional office activities related to climate change and TEK by May 25th. Ted thanked David Guest for his efforts and for ensuring that the memorandum was released. Ted stated this is a significant step for the TSC because we are achieving buy-in on the tribal science priorities at the highest levels of the agency. He added the TSC is in a good position to work with senior leadership across the agency after the tribes provide their feedback on implementation. Feedback from the tribes will allow the EPA to work more effectively with the tribal partners and implement the priorities at the community level. Ted thanked everyone for their hard work, and said where we are now in the process is validation of that senior-level management believes in the TSC and its efforts. Tia Chullakorn thanked those in the EPA who have made this happen.

TSC Business Meeting—Logistics

Donna Jackson reported that she had received the contract from the Grand Sierra Hotel in Reno, Nevada, and hopes to have an agreement by Thursday so that she can send the logistics information to the TSC

members by Monday, April 23, 2012. Donna stated that the hotel rate is \$49 per night plus taxes, which is lower than the government *per diem* rate. In addition, the resort has waved the \$10 per night resort fee. A complimentary hotel shuttle will transport participants to and from the airport, which is a 10- to 15-minute shuttle ride from the hotel.

TSC Business Meeting—Agenda

Ted reported that the Agenda Development Team met on April 12, 2012, to discuss the agenda for the June meeting. The call was attended by Ted, Monica, Jeff, Katie Renwick, Orville Huntington, James Leathers and Kristen LeBaron. Ted provided an overview of the agenda, noting that members must be prepared for the discussions prior to the meeting because there is very little time available beforehand.

Monica reported that Tia and Dan Mosley participated in a bioassessment training workshop that relates to both of the tribal science priorities. Monica suggested that a case study of the application of bioassessment on tribal lands could be added to the “Implementation of National TSPs: Approaches, Partners and Coordination Efforts” portion of the agenda. Tia explained that the workshop participants visited tribal lands and tribal members shared their traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) about the species that used to be present, how they were used, and how climate change has impacted them. Ted thought that it would be a great opportunity to hear the case study at the face-to-face meeting and asked whether the TSC members agreed to add the presentation to the agenda. Lee Juan Tyler noted that climate change has been occurring for eons and provided an example about native animals from 3,000 years ago. He stated that most climate change was man-made and provided examples of climate change impacts in his region (e.g., mercury in fish, loss of woodlands). Ted agreed that these were important points, and this presentation might help address some of these issues. None of the TSC members disagreed with adding the presentation. Monica will follow up with Tia to confirm speakers for the presentation.

Ted noted that the second day of the meeting is focused on the Tribal ecoAmbassadors Program, and he highlighted the components of the technical plenary session devoted to the program. The session following the plenary session will be an important discussion regarding a TSC-sponsored fall meeting focusing on TEK. The third day will be devoted to a field trip, potentially at Pyramid Lake, which is about a 2-hour drive from the meeting hotel.

Patti asked whether the TEK information she recently shared with Ted and Monica was being incorporated. Monica will send the information to all of the TSC members; Ted thought that it was very useful information. Patti explained that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a Traditional Ecological Knowledge Program and has been involved in numerous TEK activities since 2009. A link for online training, a webinar, a PowerPoint presentation and a recording of the presentation at the ROC are available. She added these resources could be helpful in planning the TSC’s TEK workshop.

Monica asked John Mosley if he was interested in meeting to discuss the field trip on day 3 of the meeting. John said that he could develop an agenda of potential activities for the field trip. Monica explained that the EPA would not be able to fund transportation to Pyramid Lake and does not want to place any undue burden on the tribe. John said that a transportation strategy could be developed depending on the number of rental cars that are approved for travelers; he thought that the distance from the meeting hotel to his reservation was only 1 hour rather than 2 hours. Monica stated she did not think many rental cars would be approved because of the complimentary hotel shuttle. Monica and John agreed to schedule a meeting to discuss the field trip to the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe’s reservation.

Announcements

Monica said that she, Ted, Jeff, Lee Juan and Lon Kissinger will attend the Region 10 Tribal Leaders Summit from April 30 through May 4, 2012, in Grand Ronde, Oregon. The theme of the meeting is “TEK: Western and Traditional Science.” The TSC was extended an invitation to participate in the conference because TEK was identified as a national tribal science priority. Lon described two sessions that he is moderating. The first is on fish consumption and will include a discussion of Idaho’s water quality criteria package, which does not take into account tribal fish consumption. The second session focuses on Native Americans and risk assessment. Katie McDonald, who presented at the 2010 National Tribal Science Forum, is presenting. Jim Fall, who is conducting Alaska traditional subsistence food harvest surveys, will explain how the resulting information will be used in risk assessment in Alaska. Marc Stifelman will present about the comprehensive dietary risk benefit survey that he has been working on with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation near the Upper Columbia Superfund Site.

David Guest said that the EPA-Tribal Climate Change Adaptation Workgroup had been established and had met during the prior month. The group plans to meet monthly, although it may be necessary to meet more frequently. The purpose is to exchange information and investigate methods to build capacity for tribes in terms of climate adaptation. The EPA has developed an agency-wide climate adaptation plan, and the TSC members should consider whether they would like to submit written comments on the plan by the end of the comment period, May 15, 2012. The Workgroup also is developing a list of EPA climate change adaptation activities that may be of interest to the tribes. The next Workgroup call will be on Monday, April 23, 2012.

Monica mentioned the 2012 National Training Conference on the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) and Environmental Conditions in Communities was held last week. Beth reported that the conference was well attended, and included several tribal members, participants from Alaska and the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP). She stated there were breakout sessions focused on toxic releases in tribal communities, and in particular John Banks from the Penobscot Indian Nation spoke about the Penobscot River Restoration Project. Beth informed the TSC that the TRI Tribal Rule was signed by the EPA Administrator on April 11, 2012. She will notify TSC members via email when it is published in the *Federal Register*.

Ted thanked the members for participating and reminded them that the May teleconference would be the last one prior to the face-to-face meeting. He adjourned the conference call at 3:02 p.m.

Action Items

- ✧ Monica will send the TSC members background material “homework” on the Tribal ecoAmbassadors Program and the revised TSC Overview document prior to the face-to-face meeting.
- ✧ Jeff will send the contact information for Resource Media to Monica via email.
- ✧ Monica will follow up with Tia about the tribal bioassessment case study presenters.
- ✧ The Tribal Caucus members will determine what type of session will be most useful for them during the face-to-face meeting and inform Ted of their choice(s).
- ✧ The TSC members will provide input regarding the proposed spring face-to-face meeting agenda items to Jeff, Ted or Monica.
- ✧ Monica will send the TEK information from Patti to all of the TSC members via email.

- ✧ Monica and John will arrange a meeting to discuss the face-to-face meeting field trip.
- ✧ Beth will inform the TSC members when the TRI tribal rule is published in the *Federal Register*.

NATIONAL EPA-TRIBAL SCIENCE COUNCIL

CONFERENCE CALL

APRIL 16, 2012

2:00 PM – 3:00 P.M. EASTERN DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Call-in Number: **866-299-3188**

Access Code: **2025648322#**

FINAL AGENDA

- 2:00 – 2:05 Roll Call
- 2:05 – 2:10 March business meeting minutes distributed for review and finalized
- 2:10 – 2:30 Caucus Report Outs
 - Tribal Caucus—Jeff Mears
 - Region 6 RTOC (Genevieve McGeisey)
 - Region 8 ROC (Mike Durglo)
 - Milwaukee Climate Conversation
 - EPA Caucus—Ted Coopwood
 - Joint OITA-ORD Memo on National Tribal Science Priorities
- 2:30 – 2:35 TSC Spring Business Meeting—Logistics
 - Dates: June 12-14, 2012 in Reno, Nevada
 - Hotel/reservation timeline (Donna Jackson, BLH Technologies, Inc.)
- 2:35 – 2:55 TSC Spring Business Meeting—Agenda
 - Agenda Development Team (ADT) Workgroup
 - Met on April 12, 2012
 - Revised agenda discussion
- 2:55 – 3:00 Announcement(s):
 - Region 10 Tribal Leaders Summit, April 30–May 4, 2012 in Grand Ronde, OR
 - EPA-Tribal Climate Change Adaptation Workgroup

Next conference call: *May 21, 2012, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. EDT*